

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP)



Office of the State
Long-Term Care
Ombudsman

Promoting Quality - Protecting Rights

*Serving the Jurisdictions of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun,
through their Area Agencies on Aging*



THE UPDATE

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Residents' Rights Month 2014

Across the country, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities along with families, ombudsmen, citizen advocates, and facility staff will celebrate Residents' Rights Month in October. Designated by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, this month highlights the importance of promoting the rights of and quality of care and services received by residents who live in our country's nursing homes, assisted living and board

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and care facilities. Setting aside a month to focus on rights in an effective way to ensure that this important topic is recognized in your community, facility, or state.

This year's theme is "Better Staffing: The Key to Better Care." The goal is to encourage residents and others to be educated about staffing and long-term care. Residents' Rights Month is an excellent opportunity to re-affirm our collective commitment to residents' rights and to honor long-term care residents,"- said Richard Gelula, Consumer Voice executive director. "We want to encourage residents and others to become informed about staffing and long-term care. There is an inextricable link between appropriate staffing standards and quality of care for the resident, and we hope to utilize Residents' Rights Month to shine a light on this important issue."

Many people are surprised to learn that the federal government does not require nursing homes to have a minimum number of staff on duty. Current federal regulations require "sufficient" staffing to meet the needs of residents. However, "sufficient" is not defined. As a result, there are nursing home residents who are not getting the care that they need because there are not enough aides and nurses to go around.

A study done by the federal government determined that nursing home residents need at least 4.1 hours of care per day. This breaks down to: 2.8 hours from nursing assistants, .55 hours from licensed practical nurses and .75 hours from registered nurses. The study found that this is the minimum amount of care needed to prevent common quality of care problems, such as pressure ulcers and dehydration.

The National Consumer Voice Nursing Home Staffing Campaign will educate the public and policymakers about the need for stronger nursing home staffing laws at both the state and federal levels and advocate for such laws to be passed.

To join or learn more about the campaign go to: www.theconsumervoice.org/betterstaffing.

Each year, the Consumer Voice develops a packet to help you plan Residents' Rights events. The packet is completely downloadable and features ready-to-use items, including promotional materials, activities to celebrate Residents' Rights Month, training tools and resources. To get this packet and learn more about this special month, please visit: <http://theconsumervoice.org/events/residents-rights-month-2014>.



NVLT COP Director Receives Award

In July 2014, the ombudsman staff traveled to Richmond to attend the annual state training. Each year, ombudsman programs throughout Virginia come together with the Virginia State Ombudsman Office. This is an opportunity to learn and get to know ombudsman from other parts of the state. The training this year was particularly special because Laura Nichols, director of the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program received an award for her "exemplary and dedicated service." As of September 8, 2014, Laura has been with the Ombudsman Program for 15 years. Congratulations to Laura on this special award!

Whitman-Walker Health Offers Services to Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, & Transgender (LGBT) Seniors

Whitman-Walker Health is known for their historic commitment to providing services that are sensitive to the needs of the LGBT communities. They are also dedicated to helping those who face barriers to accessing care. One barrier to accessing care can be living in a long-term care facility. Therefore, Whitman-Walker Health highlights two programs that can meet the needs of LGBT seniors who are residing in long-term care settings by their availability to make visits to these seniors.

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The PALS Program

People Advocating for LGBT Seniors (PALS) is a free program that connects compassionate, trained volunteer visitors with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender elders, 55 and older, who are living at home or in assisted living and nursing facilities. This program provides companionship and help, when needed, to access a variety of community services and resources. To participate as a client or to learn more about receiving free PALS services: Call Jacquetta Brooks, MSW, LGSW at 202-797-3570 and ask about "PALS" or e-mail: jbrooks@whitman-walker.org

Legal Services for Seniors

Whitman-Walker Health's Legal Services Program now offers advice and assistance on legal issues of particular relevance to aging LGBT persons, and seniors living with HIV. Whitman-Walker lawyers will be available to help LGBT or HIV positive individuals and couples to:

- obtain adequate long-term care and health care services;
- address discrimination;
- obtain all of the Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other public benefits to which they are legally entitled; and
- protect their visitation rights and decision-making rights in hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other long-term care settings.

For more information on these services or to make an appointment, contact:

Murray Scheel, Senior Staff Attorney, 202-939-7695, mscheel@whitman-walker.org

Corey Prachniak, Staff Attorney, 202-797-3575, cprachniak@whitman-walker.org

Need Information or Have a Concern About Nursing or Assisted Living Facilities?

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

12011 Government Center Parkway,
Suite 708

Fairfax, VA 22035

Offices hours are Monday through Friday
from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Intake Line: 703-324-5861 TTY: 711

Fax: 703-324-3575

Email us at:

NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.Gov

To view information on the NVLTCOP website and to see the Investigation and Complaint Log, please go to:

www.FairfaxCounty.Gov/LTCOmbudsman

What an Ombudsman does:

- ♦ **Advocates** for improving the quality of life for persons receiving long-term care services
- ♦ **Resolves complaints** against long-term care providers through **counseling, negotiation, and investigation**
- ♦ **Provides information** about long-term care providers to help make an informed decision
- ♦ **Educates** the community about long-term care issues
- ♦ **Visits** residents of long-term care facilities on a weekly basis through our volunteer program
- ♦ **Trains** long-term care staff on long-term care related information
- ♦ **Consults** with providers

New Voter ID Requirements



Virginia's new voter ID law went into effect on July 1, 2014. In this November's election, all voters must have a photo ID. Forms of identification without a photo – such as utility bills and voter registration cards – will no longer be accepted at the polls.

Only these types of photo IDs are acceptable:

- ♦ A Virginia Driver's License
- ♦ A U.S. Passport
- ♦ Student Photo ID from a Virginia College or University
- ♦ Employee Photo ID
- ♦ Any Other Photo ID Issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia or locality, or U.S. Government
- ♦ Virginia Voter Photo ID

If you do not have an acceptable photo ID, the law allows voters to receive a **free** photo ID by going to their local registrar's office. You must be a registered voter to get a voter photo ID.

- If you aren't registered to vote, you can register when you apply for your voter photo ID card.
- To vote in the November 4 election, you must register to vote and apply for your voter photo ID by Monday, October 13.

People who do not already have a photo ID, and who are unable to go to the registrar's office to get one, will not be able to vote in November. Therefore, it is important to identify people who may be disenfranchised by the new law.

Don't have a photo ID? Problems getting to the Registrar's Office for a free photo ID?

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Virginia wants to know!

Contact them by calling: 804-644-8080 OR email them at: ACLUVA@ACLUVA.ORG

For more information, visit the Voter Registration page for your city or county.

Arlington County: <http://vote.arlingtonva.us/>

City of Alexandria: <http://www.alexandriava.gov/Elections>

Fairfax County: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/vregis.htm>

Loudoun County: <http://www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?NID=130>

The NVLTCOP Welcomes a New Staff Ombudsman!



Nicole Fullerton has recently moved back to Northern Virginia with her family after spending 3 years in Colorado. As a military spouse, she and her family have moved often, but hopes that this will be their permanent home. She is currently living in the Kingstowne area with her husband, two young girls and their 9 year old German shepherd. In her spare time Nicole enjoys playing with her girls, nights out with her husband and going on "Adventure Days" with the family to explore new places.

Nicole obtained her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Miami University, Oxford OH and her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Prior to moving from Virginia to Colorado, Nicole worked for Fairfax County Adult Protective Services. Most recently, Nicole worked for the Department of Veteran's Affairs as a Social Worker in a primary care clinic.

Nicole is very excited to be part of the Ombudsman program and back to Fairfax County.

Fairfax County Health Department

WHAT IS AN OUTBREAK?

If you suspect on-going, person-to-person transmission at your facility, or if it seems like more people are sick than usual, you may have an outbreak. An outbreak is the occurrence of cases of ANY disease in excess of what would normally be expected in a defined community, geographical area or season.

WHAT IS INFLUENZA?

- Influenza, or the flu, is a highly contagious respiratory infection that infects by entering the body through mucus membranes in the mouth, nose or eyes.
- The flu spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes nearby or if you've touched a contaminated surface like a doorknob and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Communicability is greatest in the first 3-5 days of illness. In immunocompromised individuals, the flu virus can shed for 7-10 days.

WHAT IS NOROVIRUS?

- Norovirus (also known as the "stomach flu" and "winter vomiting disease") are a group of viruses that cause inflammation of the stomach and large intestine lining. The viruses are found in the vomitus and feces of people with active symptoms.
- A person can continue to spread norovirus for up to 2 weeks after he or she recovers.
- There is limited immunity from reinfection.
- Dry vacuuming carpets or buffing hard

surface floors can aerosolize norovirus, sending the virus into the air.

- Norovirus can survive on inanimate surfaces for up to 7 days sending the virus into the air.
- Norovirus can survive on inanimate surfaces for up to 7 days.

WHO DO I CALL IF I SUSPECT AN OUTBREAK?

Early implementation and **strict adherence** are key to controlling outbreaks. Contact your local health department for guidance, resources and questions.

Health Department	Phone Number
Alexandria	571-259-8549
Arlington	571-438-4480
Fairfax	703-246-2433
Loudoun	703-737-8474

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT OUTBREAKS?

- **Maintain** strict hand hygiene. Glove and gown use for care of ill residents and contact with potentially contaminated surfaces. Wear a mask for care of residents with vomiting or influenza-like symptoms.
- **Implement** a standing orders program that allows for the rapid administration of antiviral medications if required during an outbreak.
- **All long-term care facility residents and staff should receive seasonal influenza vaccinations.**

INTERESTED IN TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES?

If you're interested in receiving training, guidance or more information, please contact your local health department.

New Volunteer Ombudsmen Complete Training Class

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program just completed the 2014 fall training for New Volunteer Ombudsmen. This is the first year that two trainings per year were offered and, due to popular demand, will become our standard! There were wonderful guest speakers who, as experts on the subjects, shared their passion with us and the trainees. A few of the topics on the agenda included Residents' Rights, Advocating for the Resident with Alzheimer's disease and other Dementias, Ethics and Confidentiality, Problem Identification and Investigative Skills, Infection Control and Boundaries.

Trainee comments included: "Fantastic." "Excellent presentation, excellent information, very encouraging!" "Very informative. Answered a lot of my questions." "The information itself was detailed and useful. The group discussion was spirited and helpful, leading to a better understanding of boundaries."

We are so very grateful for our new volunteers and for our established volunteer team. Without their dedication, knowledge and compassion, we would not be able to do the work that we do. Our new volunteers will begin their work in their assigned Assisted Living and/or Nursing communities in September and October of 2014.





The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all programs and services. To request reasonable accommodations or alternate formats, call 703-324-5861 (voice); 711 (TTY).

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